

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (currently amended). A hood-type annealing furnace, especially for steel strip or wire bunches, with an annealing base for receiving the material to be annealed, a protective hood which is placed on the furnace in a gas-tight manner, a radial blower which is held in the annealing base and comprises a blade wheel and a guide apparatus enclosing the blade wheel for circulating a protective gas in the protective hood, a heat exchanger for cooling the protective gas, which heat exchanger is connected on an input side via a flow conduit with a pressure side of the radial blower and opens on an output side in an annular gap between the guide apparatus and the protective hood, and a deflection device which is axially displaceable into the pressure-side flow path of the radial blower for optional connection to the radial blower of the flow conduit which leads to the heat exchanger, wherein the protective hood is held in a gas-tight manner via an annular flange, the heat exchanger is disposed directly beneath the annular flange, the flow conduit consists of an annular conduit starting from an outer circumference of the guide apparatus and being concentric to the annular gap, and the deflection device

is an annular deflection slide which encloses the guide apparatus on the outside.

2 (previously presented). A hood-type annealing furnace as claimed in claim 1, wherein the annular conduit and the annular gap are separated from each other by a cylindrical wall which is held in an axially displaceable way and carries the annular deflection slide.

3 (previously presented). A hood-type annealing furnace as claimed in claim 1, wherein guide blades of the guide apparatus have recesses for the deflection slide on an outer face side of the guide blades.